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⊕ EARTH HAS BEEN INVADED BY KILLER ROBOTS AGAIN!

✱ IAN FRYER SEES AN OLD PLOT GIVEN AN EXCITING NEW LEASE OF LIFE.

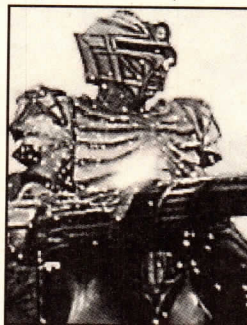
Sometimes reviewing action videos can result in some nice surprises. Big budget theatrical

releases come with big budget publicity, so by the time you actually get to see them you have a good idea as to what the film is about. If the hero happens to be Arnold or Jean-Claude, then you should also have a pretty good idea as to the outcome of the film.

When a film arrives which is totally unfamiliar, and has no big stars, or even

anyone you saw once on *Charlie's Angels*, it's a fair bet that it'll either be terrible or terrific. Happily, *APEX* is firmly in the latter camp. When a time travel experiment

goes wrong in 2073, an APEX (Advanced Prototype Exploration Unit) killer robot is sent back to 1973 to



destroy a faulty probe sent back in time 100 years. Scientist Nicholas Sinclair (Richard Keats) is accidentally sent back too, and when a 'time window' opens for him to return, he finds that he is now in a different 2073.

In this 2073 Earth has been almost overrun by APEX robots, and Sinclair is a soldier

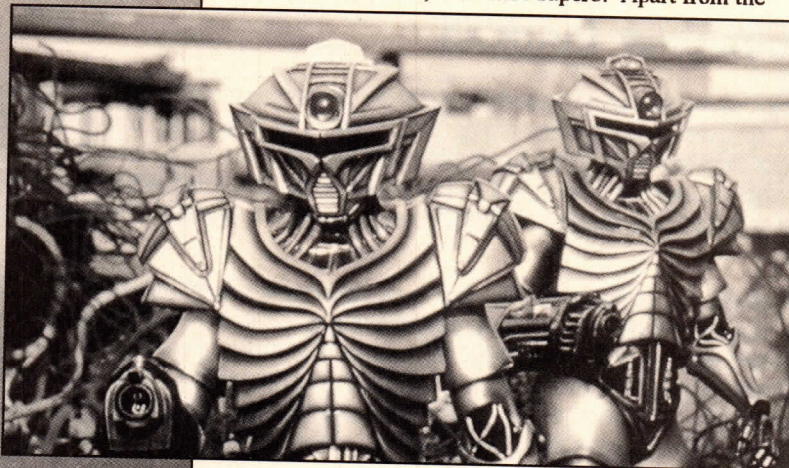
desperately trying to protect the few survivors. Discovering that the time travel lab still exists, he leads a suicide

mission to return to the lab and prevent the time paradox from ever having happened. Matters are complicated by the fact that one of the soldiers on the mission is Sinclair's wife, who doesn't know him in this



variation on *The Terminator*, but even that was a variation on *Soldier*, an episode of *The Twilight Zone* (and author Harlan Ellison even has a court ruling to prove it).

Despite the lack of stars, real money seems to have been spent on the effects, which are superb. Apart from the



huge explosions (call me weird, but I rather like huge explosions in films) and convincing props, state of the art computer animation has been employed for the time travel sequences.

It's no cure for cancer, and unlikely to appear on anyone's ten best list - heck, even I couldn't describe it as art, but *APEX* is a good, solid SF action thriller, and definitely a recommended rent.

ADVANCED PROTOTYPE EXPLORATION UNIT

time-line, and is dying of a virus which Sinclair caused when travelling to 1973.

Now I know all this sounds terribly complicated, but it's been the stuff of so many films over the years, especially

The Terminator, which is the film *APEX* most resembles, that it's all perfectly simple when on screen. It's actually too simple, since the producers have put a voice-over onto the film which explains the plot about five times in case you haven't been concentrating.

Nobody ever said that good films have to be original, and *APEX* wears its influences on its sleeve. The lab is basically the same as the one in *Time Tunnel*, only with better props, while the big truck thing from that terrible seventies SF film *Damnation Alley* even makes a guest appearance. The *APEX* robots, meanwhile, are dead ringers for the Cylons from *Battlestar Galactica*. The plot is, as I mentioned, a

